AMAR CHITRA KATHA

PARASHURAMA

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THE SIXTH INCARNATION OF LORD VISHNU

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

Parashurama, the sixth incarnation of Lord Vishnu, is one of the immortals of Hindu mythology. It is in this incarnation that we encounter for the first time the emergence of a mature, well-developed human character. Because the first four incarnations belonged to non-human species and the fifth was a mere slip of a boy.

Parashurama in many ways is paradoxical. He loved his mother dearly and yet he slew her without a moment's hesitation. He was born a Brahman but he was a better soldier than any Kshatriya and went on to annihilate the Kshatriyas in the battlefield. Though born in a family of hermits, Parashurama was a man of action. His love of action took him into the eras of Rama and Krishna. Thus this is the only incarnation to step out of the confines of its own times.

Parashurama is the patron God of the land that stretches in between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea on the West Coast of India. People there believe that his powerful axe reclaimed the land for them from the depths of the ocean.

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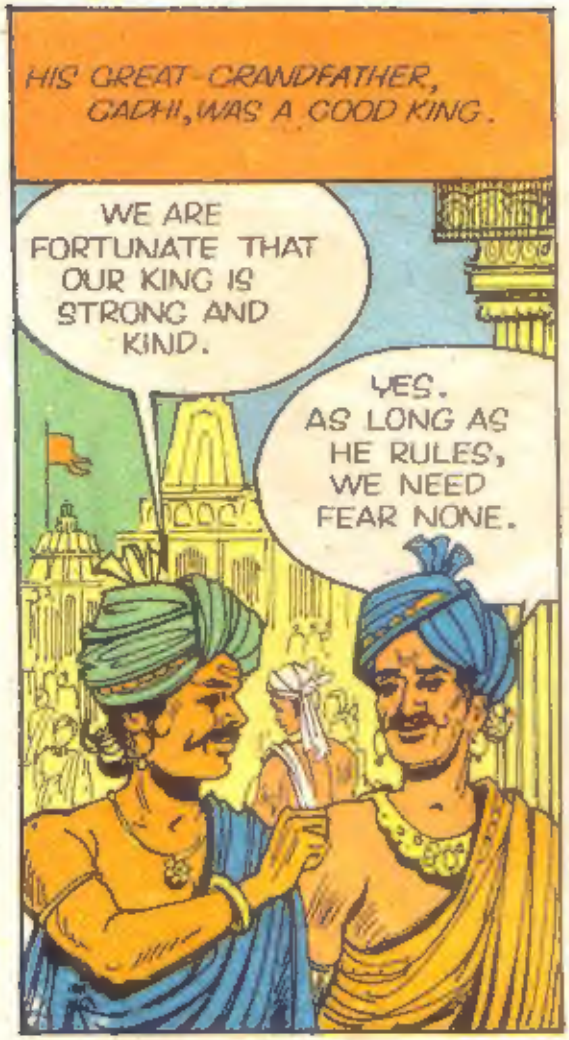
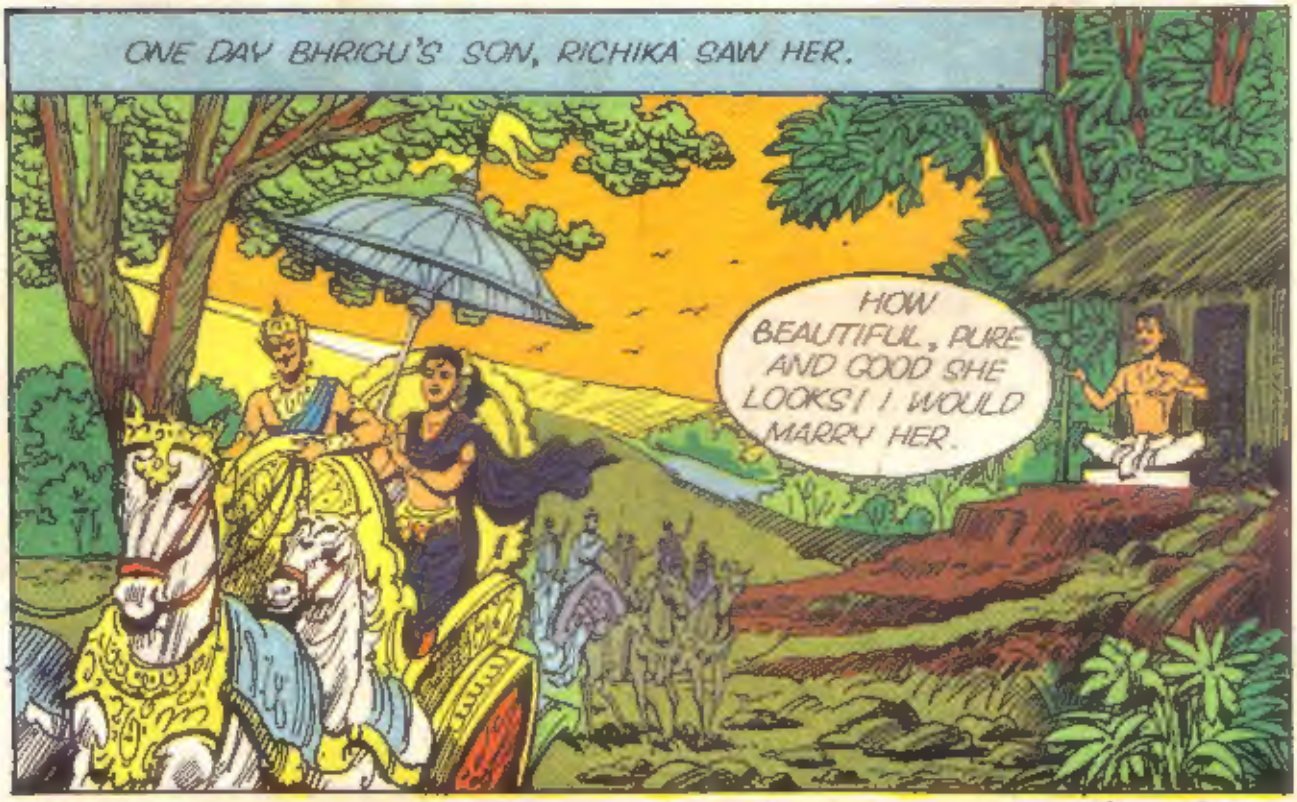
PARASHURAMA

PARASHURAMA WAS BORN THE SON OF RISHI JAMADAGNI AND RENUKA. BUT IT WAS A BIRTH UNDER STRANGE CIRCUMSTANCES.


HIS GREAT-GRANDFATHER, GADHI, WAS A GOOD KING.
WE ARE FORTUNATE THAT OUR KING IS STRONG AND KIND.
YES. AS LONG AS HE RULES, WE NEED FEAR NONE.

GADHI HAD A DAUGHTER CALLED SATYAVATI, BUT NO SON.

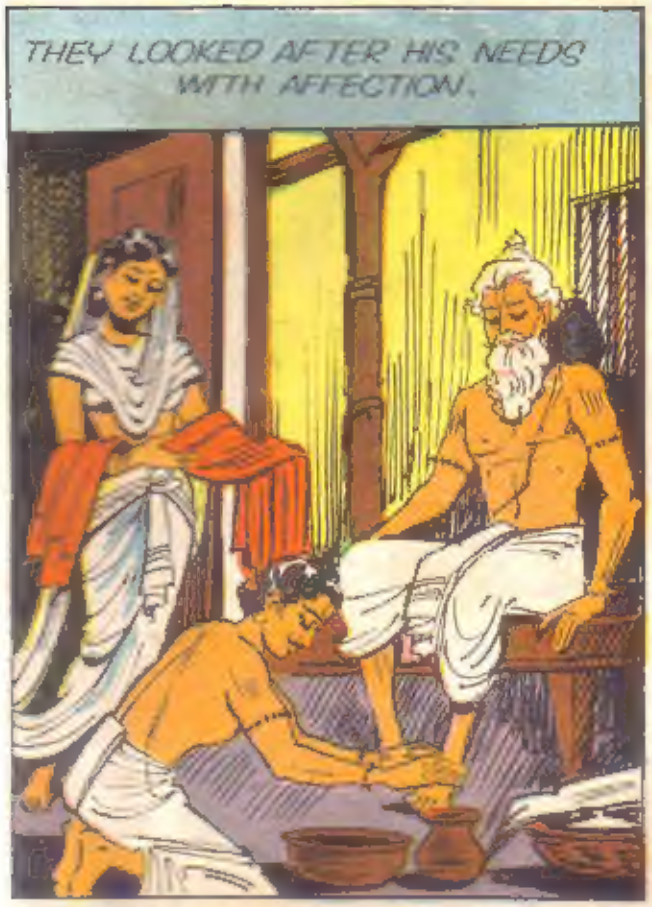

ONE DAY BHRIGU'S SON, RICHIKA SAW HER.
HOW BEAUTIFUL, PURE AND GOOD SHE LOOKS! I WOULD MARRY HER.

HE WENT TO HER FATHER.
I HAVE COME TO YOU SEEKING YOUR DAUGHTER'S HAND.
I AM HONOURED, GREAT SAGE. BUT...

...YOU WILL HAVE TO BRING A DOWRY OF 1000 BROWN HORSES. IT IS THE CUSTOM IN OUR FAMILY.

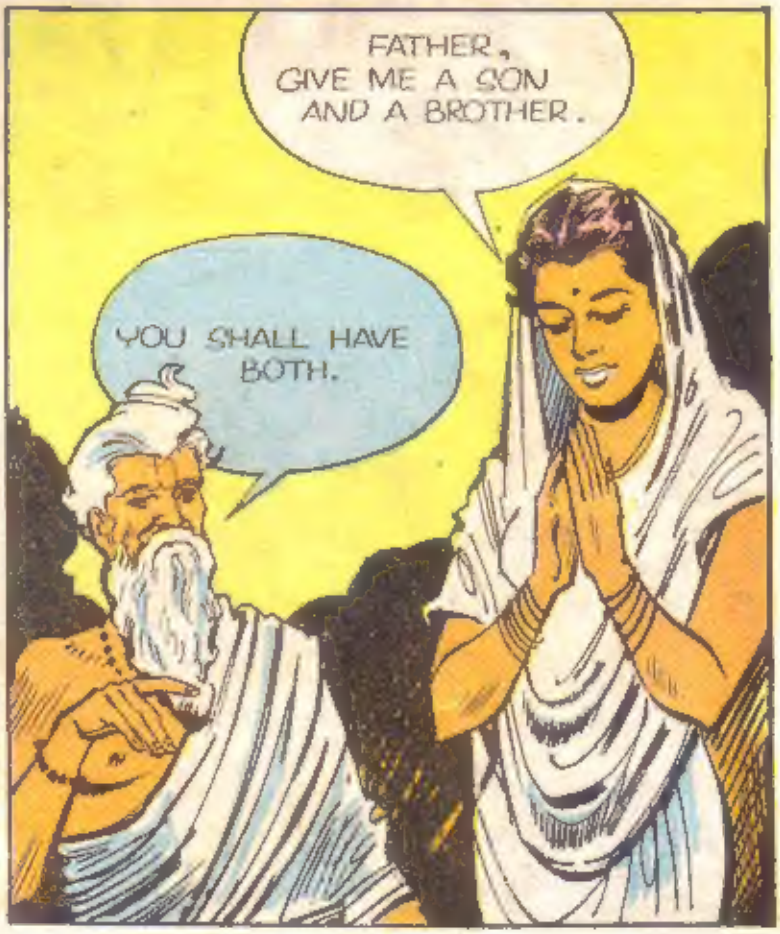
CAN YOU?
IS THAT ALL? IT SHOULD NOT BE VERY DIFFICULT.

SO RICHIKA GAVE GADHI THE THOUSAND BROWN HORSES...
...AND WAS MARRIED TO SATYAVATI.
ONE DAY BHRIGU CAME TO VISIT HIS SON AND DAUGHTER-IN-LAW.


THEY LOOKED AFTER HIS NEEDS WITH AFFECTION.

I AM INDEED FORTUNATE IN MY CHILDREN.

BHRIGU WAS PLEASED.
OBEDIENT AND DUTIFUL DAUGHTER-IN-LAW, I AM WILLING TO GRANT YOU ANY BOON YOU ASK OF ME.

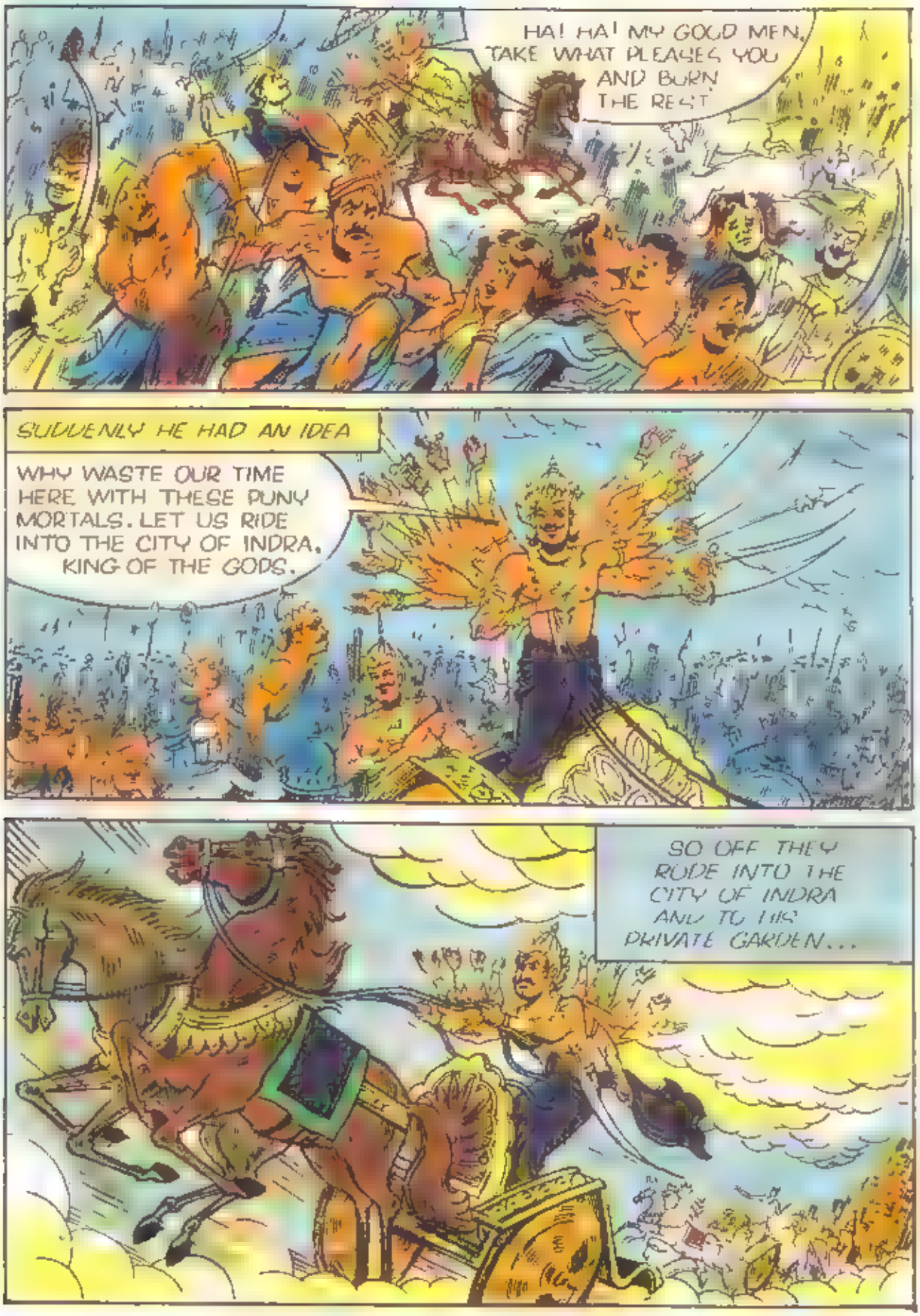

FATHER, GIVE ME A SON AND A BROTHER.
YOU SHALL HAVE BOTH.

THEN HE TOOK SATYAVATI ASIDE.
HERE ARE TWO POTS OF SACRED RICE AND MILK. THIS ONE IS FOR YOU...
...AND THAT ONE FOR YOUR MOTHER.
WHEN BHRIGU LEFT, SATYAVATI PICKED THE POTS AND ALONG WITH HER HUSBAND WENT TO HER MOTHER.
WHEN SHE REACHED —
MOTHER! MOTHER! I HAVE TWO POTS OF SACRED RICE AND MILK, WHICH WILL GIVE US A MIGHTY SON EACH.
YOUR MARRIAGE TO RICHIKA HAS INDEED BROUGHT US GOOD FORTUNE.

BUT HER MOTHER TOOK THE POT MEANT FOR SATYAVATI AND...
...SATYAVATI TOOK THE ONE MEANT FOR HER MOTHER.
SAGE BHRIGU IN HIS SPIRITUAL VISION SAW THE EXCHANGE.
ALAS, MY CHILD! YOU DID NOT HEED MY INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY.
NOW, YOUR MOTHER'S SON THOUGH A KSHATRIYA, WILL TAKE TO THE LIFE OF AN ASCETIC.

AND YOUR SON THOUGH A BRAHMANA, WILL BECOME A WARRIOR.
SATYAVATI BEGAN PLEADING WITH BHRIGU.
O REVERED SIRE, LET MY GRANDSON BE SUCH BUT NOT MY SON.
BHRIGU WAS MOVED BY HER ENTREATIES.
SO BE IT, MY CHILD. SO BE IT.
IN DUE TIME SATYAVATI HAD A SON.
WE SHALL CALL HIM JAMDAGNI.

NOW I SHALL ENTER THE LIFE OF A HOUSEHOLDER. I AM READY FOR IT.
SO HE MARRIED THE CHASTE RENUKA.
RUN! RUN KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA IS HERE!


HA! HA! MY GOOD MEN, TAKE WHAT PLEASES YOU AND BURN THE REST
SUDDENLY HE HAD AN IDEA
WHY WASTE OUR TIME HERE WITH THESE PUNY MORTALS. LET US RIDE INTO THE CITY OF INDRA, KING OF THE GODS.
SO OFF THEY RODE INTO THE CITY OF INDRA AND TO HIS PRIVATE GARDEN...

[illegible] TING WITH HIS WIFE, SACHI

ARJUNA, YOU HAVE GONE TOO FAR. YOUR END IS NEAR. I SHALL GO AND APPEAL TO LORD VISHNU.

IN THE MEANWHILE, THE SAINTS AND SAGES [illegible] COULD NO LONGER BEAR THE [illegible] OF THEIR DEMANDS AND SACRIFICES BY KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA.

LET US APPEAL TO LORD VISHNU TO PROTECT US.

ARJUNA GETS BOLDER EACH TIME.

YES. OTHERWISE THIS EARTH WILL BE LAID WASTE.

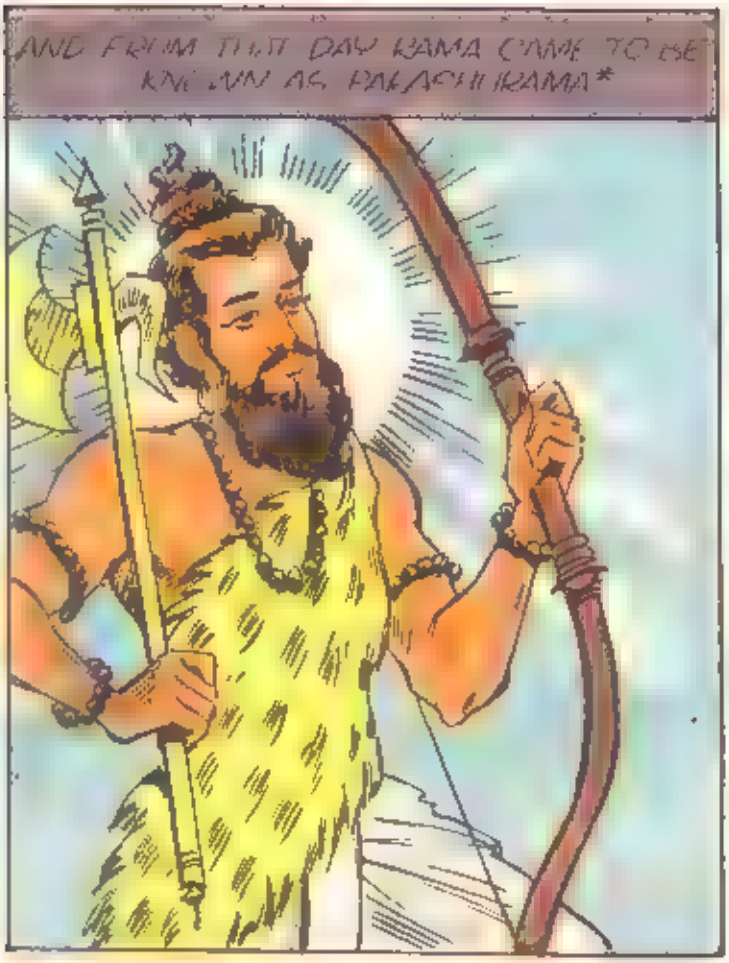
SO THEY WENT TO LORD VISHNU.

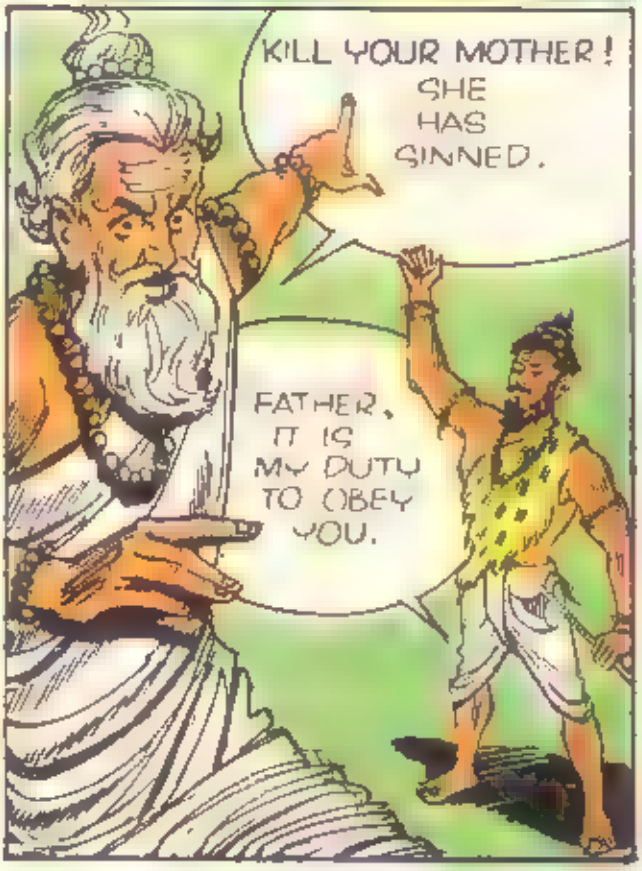
WILL SOON END HIS TYRANNY.

AS [illegible] THE SAGES HAD LEFT, [illegible]
LORD VISHNU, KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA NOW COVETS THE WEALTH OF THE VERY HEAVENS. HE MUST BE DESTROYED.
I KNOW.
I WILL TAKE AN AVATAR ON EARTH AS A BRAHMANA WITH UNUSUAL PHYSICAL PROWESS AND OVERPOWER HIM.
MEANWHILE, FIVE SONS WERE BORN TO RENUKA [illegible] JAMADAGNI.

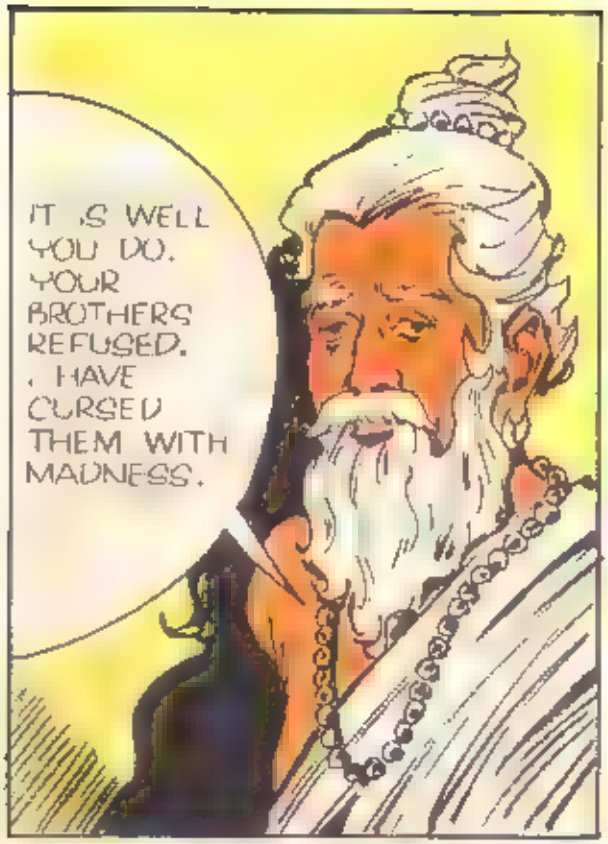
AND YOUNGEST WAS RAMA WHO WAS REALLY VISHNU REBORN
TO FULFIL THE PROMISE TO INDRA AND THE SAGES.
ENOUGH, RAMA I GIVE IN. YOU ARE STRONGER THAN I AM.
.. PLAYING WITH MONKEYS.

FATHER, I WISH TO GO TO THE GANDHAMADANA MOUNTAINS AND BY AUSTERE
GAIN LORD
FAVOUR.
GO
YOU MUST, MY SON. YOU HAVE MY BLESSINGS.
YOU HAVE PLEASED
DEVOTION.
THAT YOU
DESIRE?
I HAVE SET MY HEART ON THE FIERY AXE, THE POWERFUL PARASHU.
AS YOU
YOU
NO
ON EARTH
SURPASS
YOU.



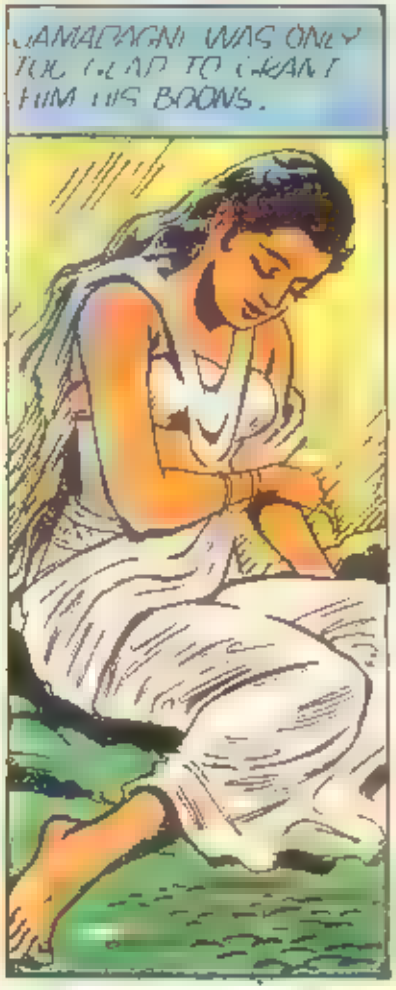


*RAMA OF THE AXE.

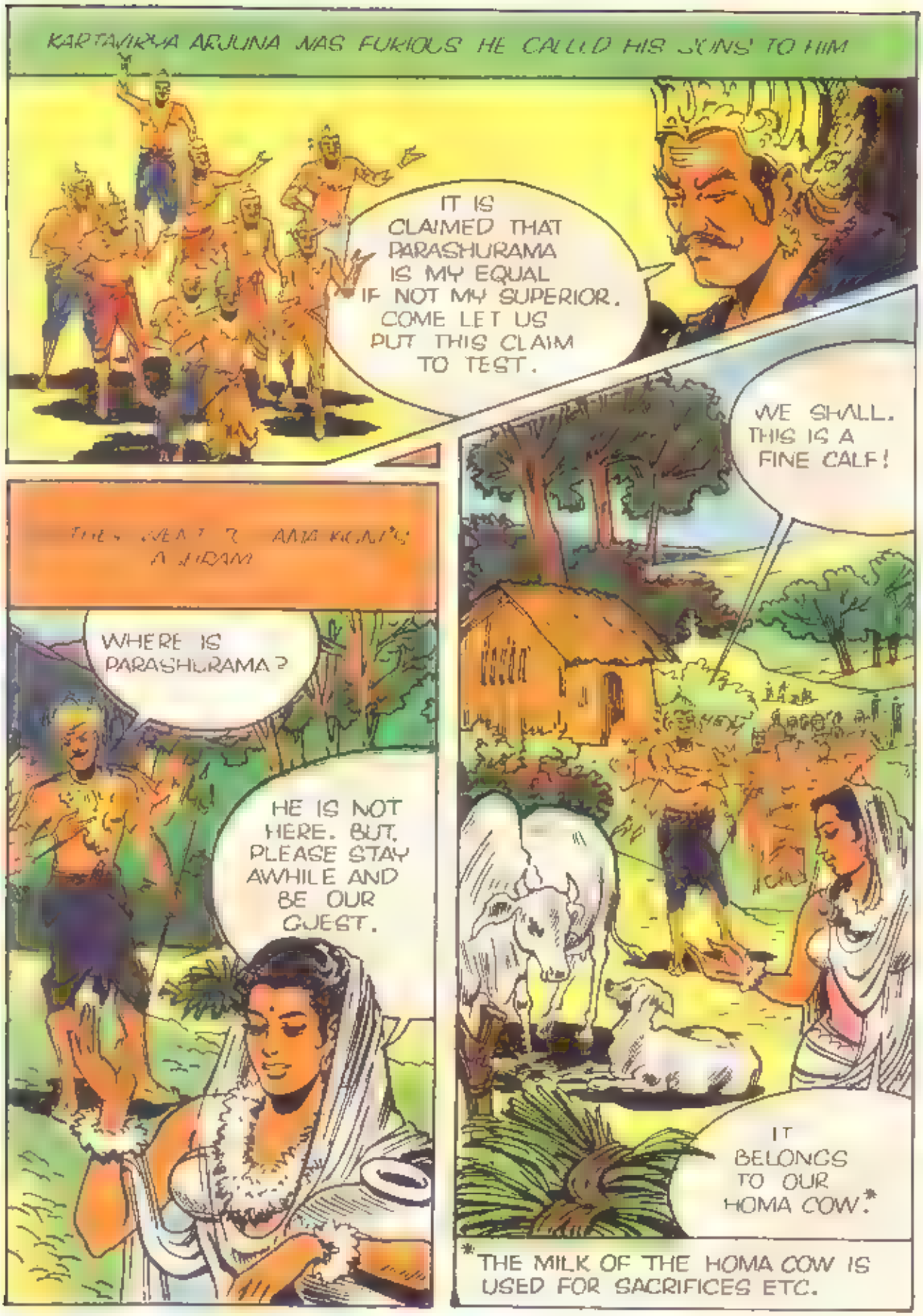

IT IS WELL YOU DO. YOUR BROTHERS REFUSED. I HAVE CURSED THEM WITH MADNESS.

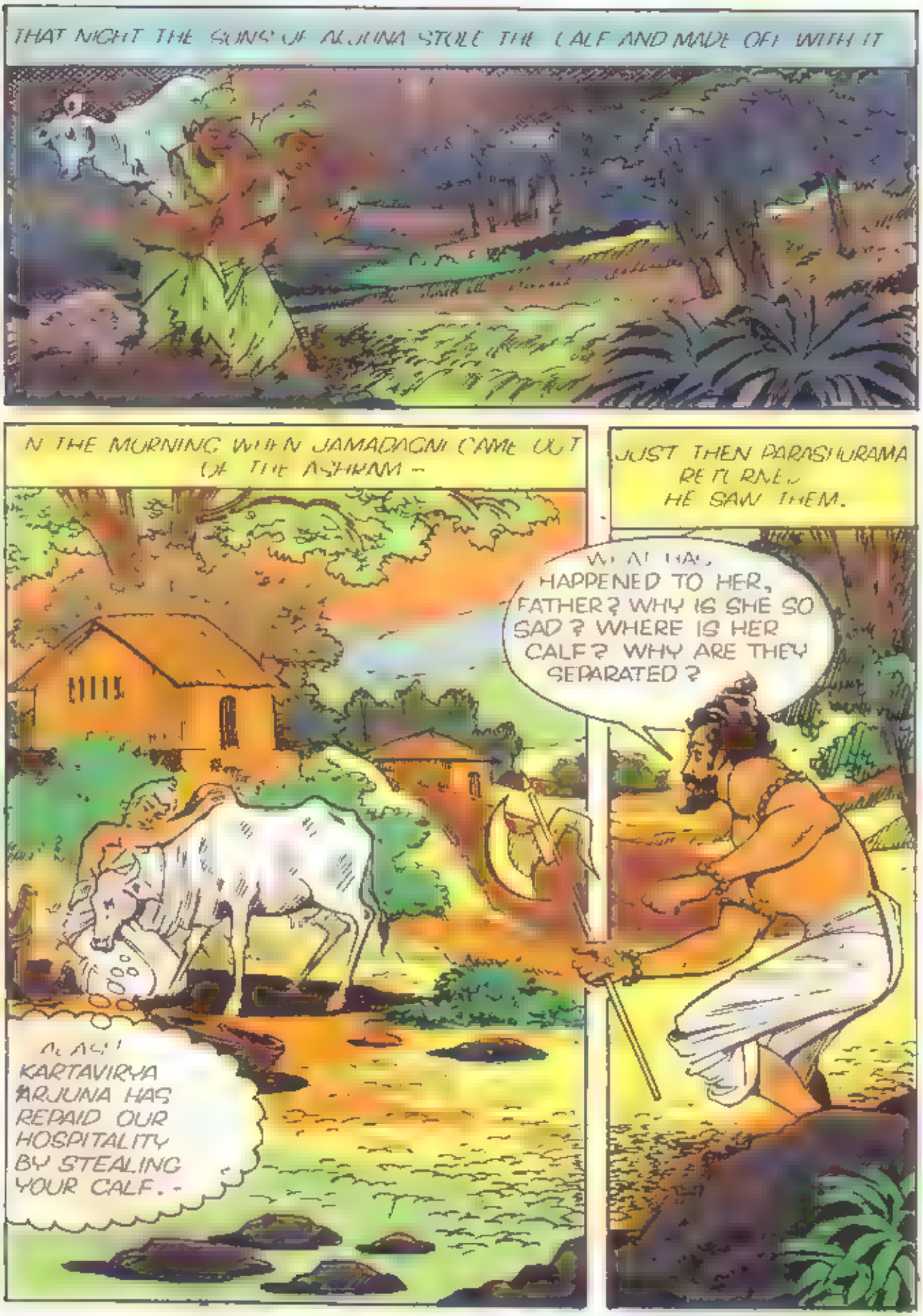
PARASHURAMA, WITH ONE BLOW OF HIS AXE, KILLED HIS MOTHER.
YOUR UNQUESTIONING OBEDIENCE PLEASES ME. ASK ANY BOON AND IT SHALL BE YOURS.

THIS WAS WHAT PARASHURAMA WAS WAITING FOR.
RESTORE MY MOTHER'S LIFE AND LOVE HER AS BEFORE. GIVE MY BROTHERS BACK THEIR SENSES AND GIVE ME EVERLASTING LIFE.
EXACTLY AS I HAD FORESEEN!
SO BE IT.


JAMADAGNI WAS ONLY TOO GLAD TO GRANT HIM HIS BOONS.

A VOICE FROM THE OCEAN STARTLED HIM.
PLEASE DO NOT HARM THE CREATURES THAT LIVE WITHIN ME. I SHALL DO WHAT EVER YOU ASK OF ME BUT PLEASE SPARE THEM.
I WILL IF YOU ANSWER THIS QUESTION. IS THERE A MAN WHO CAN RIVAL ME ?
PARASHURAMA, THE SON OF JAMADAGNI. HE IS, MORE THAN YOUR EQUAL.


KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA WAS FURIOUS. HE CALLED HIS SONS TO HIM
IT IS CLAIMED THAT PARASHURAMA IS MY EQUAL IF NOT MY SUPERIOR. COME LET US PUT THIS CLAIM TO TEST.
WE SHALL. THIS IS A FINE CALF!
WHERE IS PARASHURAMA?
HE IS NOT HERE. BUT, PLEASE STAY AWHILE AND BE OUR GUEST.
IT BELONGS TO OUR HOMA COW.*
*THE MILK OF THE HOMA COW IS USED FOR SACRIFICES ETC.

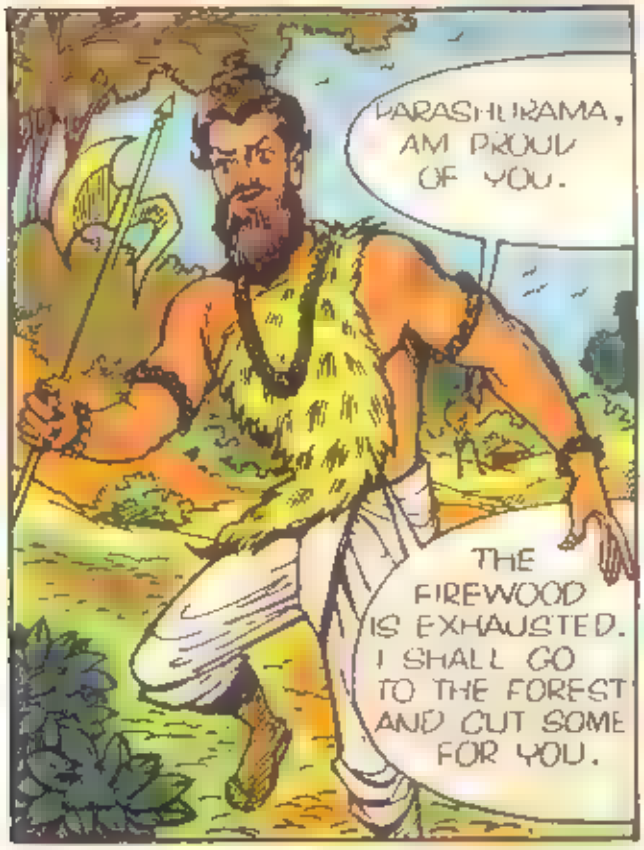

THAT NIGHT THE SONS OF ARJUNA STOLE THE CALF AND MADE OFF WITH IT
IN THE MORNING WHEN JAMADAGNI CAME OUT OF THE ASHRAM –
JUST THEN PARASHURAMA RETURNED. HE SAW THEM.
WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO HER, FATHER? WHY IS SHE SO SAD? WHERE IS HER CALF? WHY ARE THEY SEPARATED?
ALAS! KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA HAS REPAID OUR HOSPITALITY BY STEALING YOUR CALF..

JAMADAGNI TOLD HIM THE WHOLE STORY
I SHALL KILL HIM AND REDEEM YOUR CALF!
THEN PARASHURAMA TOOK HIS AXE AND RUSHED TO THE PALACE OF KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA

A DREADFUL COMBAT ENSUED IN WHICH PARASHURAMA HACKED OFF EACH ONE OF KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA'S THOUSAND ARMS AND.
..SLEW HIM.
THEN PICKING THE FRIGHTENED CALF GENTLY IN HIS ARMS

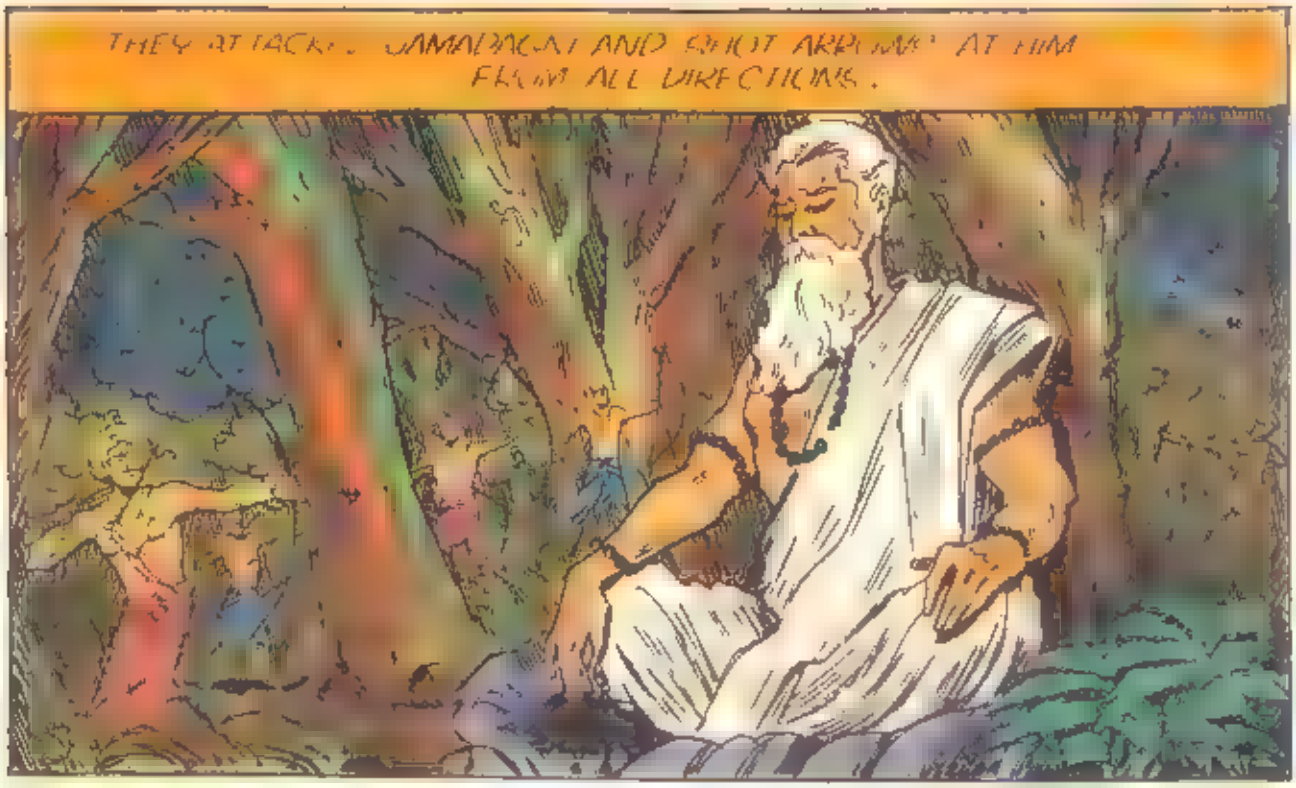
HE MADE HIS WAY BACK TO HIS FATHER'S ASHRAM.
FATHER! FATHER! I HAVE KILLED HIM, THE VILLAIN WHO STOLE OUR INNOCENT CALF

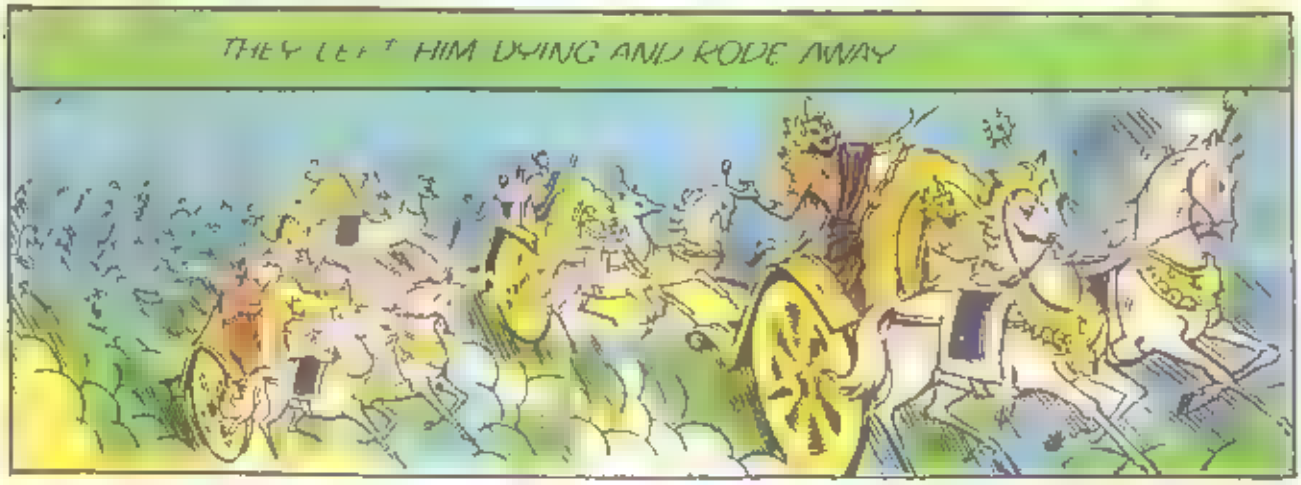
THEN THEY WENT TO THE COW AND—
GENTLE MOTHER, HAVE BROUGHT BACK YOUR CALF FOR YOU.

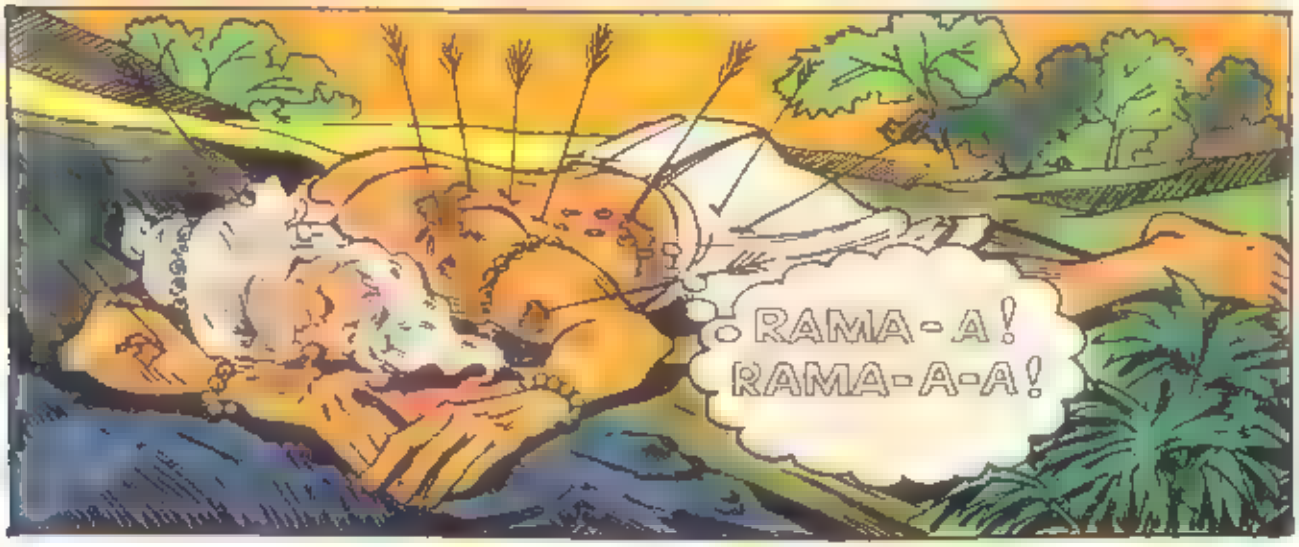

PARASHURAMA, AM PROUD OF YOU.
THE FIREWOOD IS EXHAUSTED. I SHALL GO TO THE FOREST AND CUT SOME FOR YOU.

ALAS! HE IS DEAD AND THE CALF IS MISSING.
NONE OTHER THAN PARASHURAMA COULD BE THE MURDERER

THEY WERE FURIOUS.
HE SHALL BE AVENGED! COME, LET US SEEK OUT THE MURDERER.
PARASHURAMA IS NOT TO BE SEEN ANYWHERE.
LET US KILL HIS FATHER THEN.
THAT'S RIGHT. HE KILLED OUR FATHER. DIDN'T HE?


THEY ATTACKED JAMADAGNI AND SHOT ARROWS AT HIM FROM ALL DIRECTIONS.


THEY LEFT HIM DYING AND RODE AWAY


RAMA-A!
RAMA-A-A!

FATHER! FATHER! IT IS MY FAULT THAT YOU HAVE BEEN SHOT DOWN LIKE A STAG BY THE MERCILESS ARROWS OF THE MEAN SONS OF ARJUNA.
WITH WHAT FACE WILL THEY RETURN TO THEIR FRIENDS AND SERVANTS AFTER COMMITTING SUCH A HEINOUS CRIME?

AS PARASHURAMA CREMATED HIS FATHER'S BODY, HE TOOK A VOW.
I SHALL NOT REST, DEAR FATHER, TILL I HAVE WIPED OUT THE ENTIRE MARTIAL RACE OF THE KSHATRIYAS.
WHEN THE LAST EMBERS DIED OUT, HE RAISED HIS AXE AND BEGAN HIS SELF-IMPOSED TASK.
KARTAVIRYA ARJUNA'S SONS WERE THE FIRST TO BE WIPED OUT.

THEN ONE BY ONE HE MASSACRED ALL THE KSHATRIYAS ON EARTH.
BUT EACH TIME HE KILLED ONE LOT, THEIR SONS WOULD SPRING UP.
I SHALL FIGHT TILL NOT A SINGLE ONE OF YOU IS LEFT. MY FATHER HAS GRANTED ME EVERLASTING LIFE.
THUS PARASHURAMA PATIENTLY CONTINUED WIPING OUT TWENTY ONE GENERATIONS OF KSHATRIYAS.

BUT ALAS! HE KILLED WITHOUT DISCRIMINATION BOTH THE EVIL AND THE GOOD KSHATRIYAS.
I HAVE HARMED NONE. MY SUBJECTS ARE HAPPY. WHY DO YOU WANT TO KILL ME AND DEPRIVE THEM OF MY PROTECTION??

BUT PARASHURAMA WAS RELENTLESS.
ONE OF YOUR CASTE MURDERED MY FATHER WHILE HE WAS DEFENCELESS. SO YOU SHALL DIE.

ALAS! OUR KING IS KILLED AND THERE IS NONE TO PROTECT US
SHUDRAS AND VAISHYAS HAVE NO REGARD FOR BRAHMANAS AND THEIR WOMEN.

MOTHER EARTH FELT THAT IT WAS ME TO ATHREME.
I SHALL APPROACH SAGE KASHYAPA.

SO MOTHER EARTH WENT TO KASHYAPA.

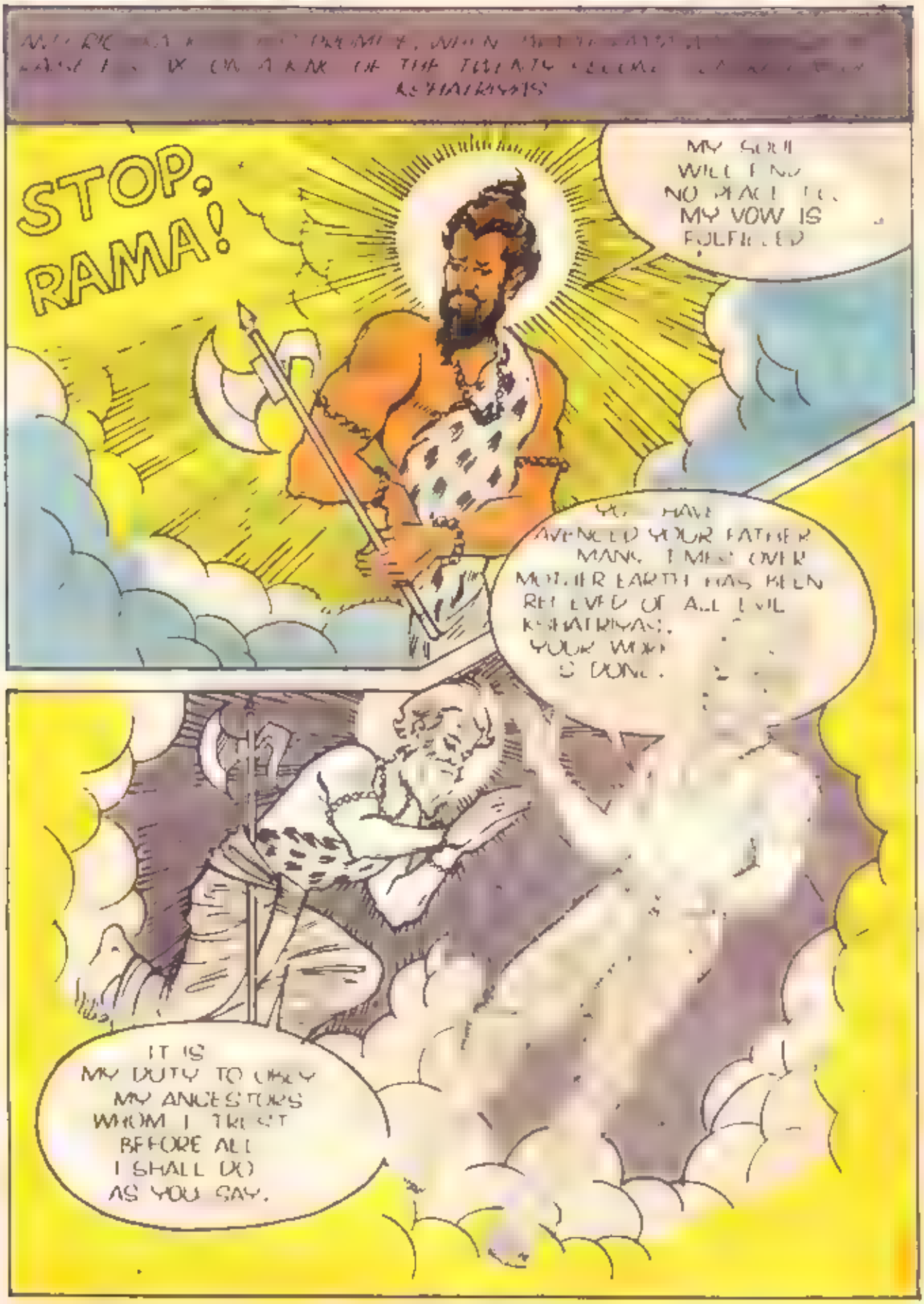
LORD PARASHURAMA'S WORK IS OVER. I AM RELIEVED OF MY BURDEN. PLEASE STOP HIM NOW.

I WILL SPEAK TO THE SPIRITS OF HIS ANCESTORS.

KASHYAPA BY HIS SPIRITUAL POWERS, CALLED FORTH THE SPIRIT OF RICHIKA.

PARASHURAMA'S MISSION IS OVER. IT IS NOW TIME FOR HIM TO DESIST

SO SHALL IT BE. HE WILL OBEY HIS ANCESTORS.

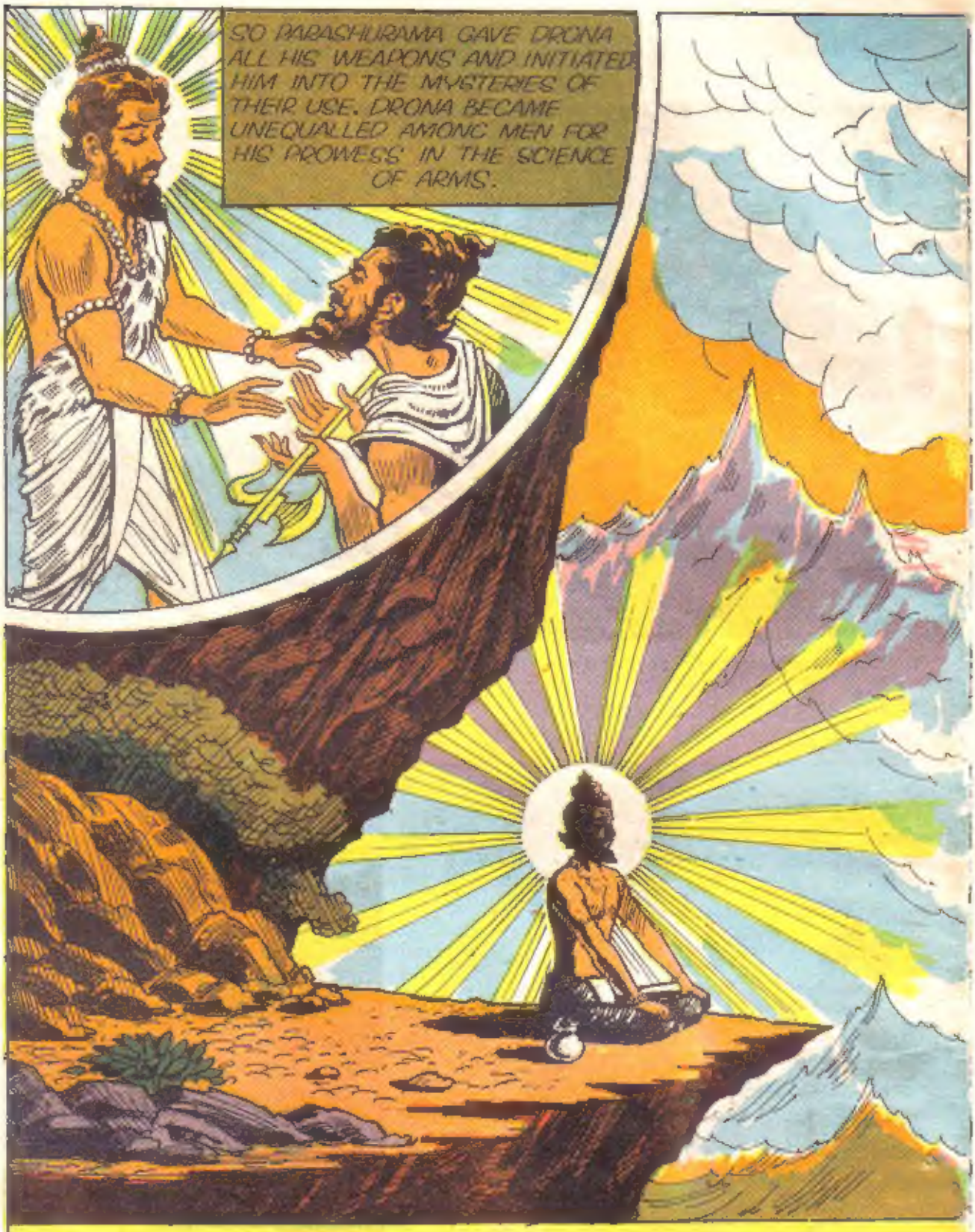

STOP, RAMA!
MY SON WILL FIND NO PEACE TILL MY VOW IS FULFILLED
YOU HAVE AVENGED YOUR FATHER MANY TIMES OVER. MOTHER EARTH HAS BEEN RELIEVED OF ALL EVIL KSHATRIYAS. YOUR WORK IS DONE.
IT IS MY DUTY TO OBEY MY ANCESTORS WHOM I TRUST BEFORE ALL. I SHALL DO AS YOU SAY.

PARASHURAMA THEN HELD A GREAT SACRIFICE WHERE HE DISTRIBUTED ALL HIS WEALTH TO THE BRAHMANAS.

AFTER EVERYTHING HAD BEEN GIVEN AWAY, DRONA, THE SON OF SAGE BHARADWAJ, CAME TO HIM.

ALAS! YOU COME LATE. ALL THAT I HAVE NOW IS THIS BODY AND MY WEAPONS. I CAN GIVE YOU EITHER, AS YOU CHOOSE.

I SHALL RECEIVE THE WEAPONS WITH THE MYSTERIES OF THEIR USE.



AND PARASHURAMA, HAVING THUS RID HIMSELF OF ALL HIS WORLDLY BURDENS, RETIRED TO THE CRESTS IN THE MAHENDRA MOUNTAINS TO SPEND THE REST OF HIS DAYS, ENGAGED IN PRACTISING THE SEVEREST OF PENANCES.

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